

Common Food Stamp Myths Concerning Senior Households

These misconceptions may be keeping seniors from applying for food stamp benefits. Better information may lead to more seniors receiving Food Stamp Program benefits.

1

The Food Stamp Program is a welfare program.

The Food Stamp Program is **not** a welfare program. It is a nutrition assistance program designed to help low-income individuals and families buy and consume nutritious foods.

2

Seniors only receive \$10 a month in food stamp benefits.

Our fiscal year 1997 statistics showed:

- seniors who lived alone received an average of \$47 a month; and,
- seniors not living alone received an average benefit of \$118 a month.

3

Seniors cannot own or be in the process of buying a home. If they own or are buying a home, the government will take it.

Individuals can own or buy a home and still get food stamps. The value of an individual's resources may be used to determine eligibility. The home and its lot are not counted as a resource in the Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program does not require a person to sign away their home.

4

Seniors do not receive credit for medical and prescription drug bills.

Medical expenses that exceed \$35 a month may be deducted unless an insurance company or someone who is not a household member pays for them. Only the amount over \$35 can be deducted.

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5

Seniors are only allowed \$2,000 in resources or assets.

The resources or assets limit for senior households or households containing one senior is up to \$3,000.

6

Seniors must go to the food stamp office for an interview.

If an older person is not able to go to the food stamp office, he or she may request a telephone interview. The person may also ask a relative, pastor, neighbor, etc., to attend the interview as an authorized representative. Applicants for and recipients of SSI may also apply for food stamp benefits at the Social Security Office.

7

Senior households must be re-certified for food stamp benefits every three months.

If all adult household members are senior or disabled, the State agency may assign this household a 24-month certification period.

8

Food stamps are only for families with children.

Food stamps are for eligible individuals and families, including seniors.

9

Other people need food stamps more than seniors If a senior is certified for food stamps, he or she will be taking them away from others who have more of a need.

The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition assistance program for all people. Everyone who applies and who is determined to be eligible will get food stamp benefits.

10

Senior households who receive food stamps will not be able to receive home-delivered meals.

Households can receive food stamps and still get home-delivered meals.